

Impact of Advertisement on Audience Purchase Intention: A Case Study of the Bhramyoman Theatre Industry of Assam

¹Panchamrita Sarma, ²Dr. Samannoy Baruah,

¹Research Scholar, ADTU

panchi_ghy@rediffmail.com

Orchid id: 0009-0006-8954-2288

²Associate Professor, Assam down town University (ADTU)

Corresponding Author

Panchamrita Sarma,

Research Scholar, ADTU

panchi_ghy@rediffmail.com

Introduction

A distinctive habit which lead to formation of human civilisations is communal entertainment. Evidences of people gathering for celebrations and merrymaking even in ancient times is found in the cave and temple inscriptions. For these communal merrymaking, specific ritualistic art forms developed. Also, the importance of music, dance and drama for societies has emphasised through its trail being traced back to divine origin. Theatre was a key factor in the development of the two most notable human settlements in the west, the Greek and Roman civilizations. Greek plays are thought to have originated from celebrations of the birth of their god, Dionysus, son of Zeus. Greek tragedies originated from the catharsis, or intense emotion-driven dances, that were performed during the two festivals honouring the god Dionysus. Greek comedy and satire plays were later produced to give audiences a respite from tragic emotions, or to give drama a different emotional flavor. Since ancient times, drama has served as a main source of entertainment in India. The Vedas, which govern all aspects of Indian culture, have established the standard for drama in that country. The Natya Veda, written by Lord Brahma, is credited with evolving the idea of entertainment by incorporating ideas from the other four Vedas—the Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva. After learning the craft, Sage Bharata and his sons began acting out plays for the gods. But performing art was brought to the mortals by King Nahusa (Varapande,1987). According to a different account of the origins of drama in ancient India, Sage Bharata wrote Natyashastra, using music and words from the Rigveda.

Over the years, the dramatical forms witnessed a lot of evolutions, adding financial gains to its agenda along with enjoyment, moral and religious preaching's, The examination of performing arts as an economic activity has been highlighted by (Towser, 2010). The author describes the performing arts as a service sector, emphasizing how ephemeral they are.

Profit making is difficult because it requires utilization of all necessary resources every time, regardless of the number of audiences. The price elasticity of demand for this category of luxury goods needs careful consideration. Business growth necessitates understanding ideas like rational addiction, learning by consumption, and habit formation (Seaman, 2006). Thus, we see performing arts are profitable endeavours, research on their economic aspects is imperative.

As an illustration of the statement, consider the Assamese bhramyoman theatre sector, which since its founding in the 1960s has catered to the financial interests of various stakeholders. (In Ross, 2017)

This paper has the objective to analyse the impact of advertisement on performing arts audience

Research Methodology

This paper is a descriptive form of research. In this study it has been attempted to analyze how promotion affects customer purchase in performing arts. Both primary and secondary data is used for establishment of the objectives. Secondary data are referred to fulfil the first objective. For fulfilling the second objective, primary data are collected through structured questionnaire. A sample of 405 was surveyed. The sampling units being bhramyoman theatre audiences. A questionnaire was prepared for the research bearing a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.90, making the internal consistency excellent. The research is mostly focussed on perceived value of customers.

Bhramyoman Theatre

Assam, the gateway to the North east India, is a natural paradise. With picturesque landscapes and natural animal habitats, the state upholds a mystical aura. In consort with its natural abundance, Assam its grandeur in the field of performing arts is unmatched. A wide range of performing arts namely Oja Pali, Putola Nach, Khuliya, Bhuliya Bhaoria, Naam, Bhramyoman Theatre etc. adds up to the beauty of the state. 'Bhramyoman theatre' is a unique art form existent in the state. It is a type of itinerant theatre which involves a troupe of performers and support personnel who go from location to location, even to the most remote areas of the state, to give performances. It was claimed that Mahapurush Srimanta Shankardev created the idea in the form of Ankiya naat. Assamese genius Srimanta Shankardeva had a vision for intercommunal harmony in the state of Assam. (Bhattacharjee, 2015) It has developed into a dynamic sector of Assamese entertainment industry over time.

The Bhramyoman theatre can be understood as touring theatre group which moves about conducting plays over a period of eight months in the state. The troops consists of actors, musicians, singers, dancers, makeup artists, chefs, housekeepers, and numerous other experts. The groups also carry with them the requirements for building the stages and setting up seating. It takes careful research to manage a group of people that travels and quickly sets up a play's entire setting in a new location. The mobile theatre groups demonstrate excellent resource management despite having limited funding. It demands a thorough investigation of the subject. Additionally, it generates a great deal of employment opportunities, raising people's standards of living, particularly in Bhramyoman theatre is not a small business. Budget requirement of a group varies between Rs. 20 lakhs to Rs. 1 crore. Different departments of a mobile theatre groups are- direction of drama, decoration of stage, auditorium, sound and music, light, set and property, decoration and make up, green room, food, transportation and publicity. (Das, 2018)

The state of Assam is home to the bhramyoman theatre industry. The word 'Bhramyoman' is a Assamese word evolving from the word 'Bhramyo' which means to travel or be on the move. This kind of theatre on such a grand scale is uncommon both domestically and abroad, which makes it a fascinating field of study. The industry is a huge contributor to the state's sustainable development because it not only preserves Assamese culture and sentiments but also positively affects the people's social and economic advancement. Over the years, the Bhramyoman theatre industry has become the most significant fragment of the entertainment industry of Assam making it a flourishing service industry of the state. The involvement of finance and highly competitive market requires establishment of product quality to ensure survival and growth in the impending years.

Impact of Promotion in Performing Arts

In context of marketing promotion is an activity directed towards making the individuals aware of the products and services. It refers to formulating and implementing effective strategies to convert potential customer into customers. In case of services marketing, promotion has an additional responsibility of infusing the customers with desired behaviour during the service experience. In services, the service provider and the service customer interacts in real time for service delivery. Thus, the behaviour of the customer has an direct impact on the service delivery process; the impact being more grave in case of performing arts. In case of live performances, as in Bhramyoman theatre, the actors and dancers enact their part in front of live audiences. If the audiences are distracted or verbally

abusive, it would directly impact the performances irrespective of how well the play is being staged. Promotion can aid in constructing desired behaviour amongst audiences. Promotion is essential not only for creating awareness but also for positioning a product in the minds of the target audience and driving purchase decisions. Performing arts such as theatre are widely recognised as intangible, experiential, and cultural products, where the value is co-created between performers and audiences (Colbert, 2007; Kotler & Scheff, 1997). Due to their time-bound and non-reproducible nature, theatre performances require a promotional approach that emphasises communication, credibility, and relationship-building rather than purely transactional selling (Hill et al., 2012).

The month of August and September in Assam when a faint felling of upcoming festivals plays the heart strings of people, another tune is played. It is the advent of the theatre festivities in Assam. With hoardings and cut outs displayed across the place. People gear up for the theatre festivities. Promotion of Bhramyoman theatre is combined effort of the theatre groups as well as inviting committees. The theatre groups provide banners and posters to the inviting committees for promotion. If the inviting committees feels that the requirement of banner and poster is more, than the investment is made by them. The promotion of Bhramyoman theatre Industry is in a transformative stage with new elements being added and the system updated.

Promotion is a function of marketing dealing mostly with making people aware of the products available in the market. Another aspect of promotion is audience education. Audience Education is an essential aspect of promotion. In context of the promotion of service, audience education is an integral part; especially in the case of performing arts. In live performances, the performers interact with the audiences in real time, making audiences an integral part of service delivery. The presence and reactions of people are affecting the impact and quality of performances, making the audiences an integral part of the people aspect of performing arts (Walmsley, 2011). An audience that interacts with artists creates a unique cultural experience that is a product of both. The relationship between the two is the foundation for the emotional, creative, and logistical aspects of the performing arts. (Borgonovi, 2004). In this research, how Bhramyoman theatre industry in Assam undertakes various elements of promotion mix have been evaluated. The findings are discussed under various segments initiating with advertising.

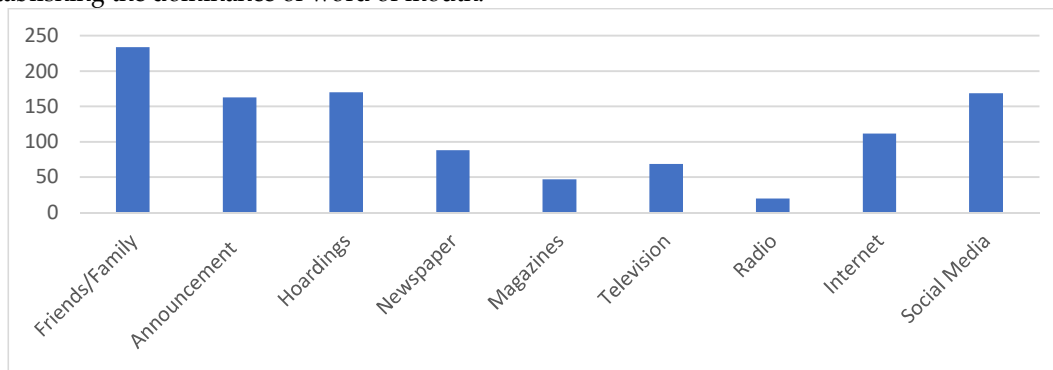
Advertising in Bhramyoman Theatre Industry

Advertising is the first and most pre dominant element of marketing mix in context of Bhramyoman theatre. The advertisement of Bhramyoman theatre is done through the use of Hoardings, Banners, Posters, Cut outs, Newspapers, Magazines, television and digital medium. The printed form of advertisement Hoardings, banners and cut outs are the most elaborately used form of theatre advertisement. These are printed by both theatre houses and inviting committees. These static outdoor elements used in theatre are designed to depict the flamboyance inherent in the theatres. Though the prints are developed with similar undertone, the purpose these serves are different. The banners specifically help in creating awareness. These highlight the name of the theatre groups and are suspended in a particular place for a long time. The banners helps in imprinting the name of the brand in the audiences minds. All the other forms of advertisements are used to generate interest and desire for the plays; make the audience attracted towards the plays. The posters, banners and cut outs provide a lot of information regarding the plays. The name, actors, date and venue on which the plays will be staged are clearly mentioned across the advertisement formats. With glimpse of elements that represent a theatre through images, typography, colors, and symbol the traditional are relied on heavily for promotions. These are placed at crowded places near the locations of the plays to be staged within a radius of 200mtr to 5-6 kms depending on the area.

A. Cut outs: The interest of the audiences is evoked through big cut out of the characters of the play. The cut outs used by Awahon theatre are the most striking ones. The 'larger than life' experience that the bhramyoman theatre attempts to offer are correctly depicted by the cut outs of characters.

B. Digital bill boards: Digital bill boards are new additions in the field of promotion of Bhramyoman Theatre. These TV like structures are used to display the names of the theatres and visuals from the plays to encourage people to take desired action regarding the plays.

C. Word-of-mouth (WOM) is the most influential form of promotion in the Bharmyoman theatre industry of Assam as revealed by audience survey. As the market of Bharmyoman theatre is experienced collectively and deeply rooted in local culture, WOM plays a key role in shaping audience decisions in a market where theatre is. Since mobile theatre performances cannot be judged before watching, people often depend on the opinions and experiences of others to decide whether to attend a show. This pattern can be explained using Social Proof Theory, which suggests that individuals tend to follow the behaviour and views of others when they are unsure. In the context of mobile theatre, visible signs such as long queues at ticket counters, packed venues, and frequent conversations in homes, markets, and community spaces act as strong signals of a show's popularity. These social cues reassure potential audiences, reduce their perceived risk, and encourage attendance. The predominance of WOM can be attributed to the fact that the target market of Bharmyoman theatre is rural and semi-urban population. This group of population is characterized by people having greater trust in personal communication than in formal advertising. Information shared through friends, family, and local networks spreads quickly and carries high credibility. As a result, word-of-mouth functions as a low-cost yet highly effective promotional tool and remains central to audience mobilization in the mobile theatre industry. In the following chart, the sources of information of information of theatre is presented. It is seen that most audiences get informed from friends and family, establishing the dominance of word of mouth.



Data Analysis and Interpretation

In order to test the effectiveness of Advertising in the industry, the elements of advertising are set into the mould of DAGMAR (Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results) framework. The framework deciphers that instead of concentrating only on the sales results, the effectiveness of advertising should be umpired by how well it moves audiences through the various stages of communication. Proposed by Russell H. Colley DAGMAR conceptualizes advertising effectiveness as a sequence of communication stages. The stages are awareness, comprehension, conviction, and action. These are stages through which consumers progress before making a purchase decision. It emphasizes setting specific, measurable communication objectives to evaluate advertising outcomes (Colley, 1961). In the DAGMAR model, consumers move through a hierarchy beginning with four distinct stages of awareness, comprehension, conviction and action. Awareness and comprehension are cognitive stages where audience recognize and comprehend the message given in advertisement. Whereas conviction and action are affective stages, where positive attitudes lead to actual behavioral responses such as purchase or recommendation.

The base of the framework is the following equation where Dependent variable is taken to be mean of the factors establishing the user buying behaviour (decision on buying). Independent variables are Mean Awareness, Mean Comprehension, Mean Conviction, and Mean Action

$$\text{Mean Buying Behaviour} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1(\text{Mean Awareness}) + \gamma_2(\text{Mean Comprehension}) + \gamma_3(\text{Mean Conviction}) + \gamma_4(\text{Mean Action}) + \gamma$$

For the analysis certain elements of advertising from Bharmyoman theatre industry is tested, which fits into the of mould of DAGMAR. The following are the interpretations-

Table: Descriptive statistics of DAGMAR Analysis

Impact of Advertisement on Audience Purchase Intention:
A Case Study of the Bhramyoman Theatre Industry of Assam

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Mean Buying	3.606	.6272	405
Mean Awareness	3.28	.990	405
Mean Comprehension	3.769	.6433	405
Mean Conviction	4.221	.6875	405
Mean Action	3.306	.6831	405

Source: Researcher's calculation

The above table presents the mean and standard deviation values of the study variables. These statistics provide an overview of respondents' perceptions regarding advertising effectiveness at different DAGMAR stages. The results indicate that respondents exhibit relatively high perceptions across all DAGMAR dimensions. Conviction records the highest mean score (4.221), suggesting that advertising has been successful in building favourable attitudes and trust toward Bhramyoman theatre. Comprehension also shows a strong mean value (3.769), indicating that consumers generally understand the advertising message and product attributes communicated. Awareness and Action show moderately high mean values, implying that while advertisements are noticed and remembered, the translation of advertising influence into actual purchase action may not be entirely automatic. These findings are consistent with the DAGMAR hierarchy, which emphasizes that cognitive and affective responses often precede behavioral outcomes. It means that confirm the progression of audiences through the phases of cognitive, affective conative stages. Firstly, the awareness stage (cognitive domain) reflects the extent to which audience become informed about the theatre offering. The findings indicate that audiences who are more exposed to communication efforts demonstrate higher recall or recognition. Secondly, the understanding/comprehension stage suggests that awareness alone is insufficient. Audiences must also interpret and assign meaning to the message. The results establish that respondents not only recognized the theatre but also developed clarity regarding its value proposition (e.g., artistic quality, uniqueness, cultural relevance). Thirdly, the conviction stage (affective domain) represents a shift from cognition to attitude formation. Results indicate that as understanding deepens, audiences begin to develop favorable attitudes, emotional resonance, or perceived credibility toward the theatre. This stage is critical because it bridges knowledge and behavioral intent, often mediated by trust, emotional engagement, and perceived authenticity. Finally, the action stage such as attendance, ticket purchase, or willingness to recommend—demonstrates the behavioral outcome of prior stages. The empirical relationship observed in the findings suggests a cumulative effect, where movement through earlier stages significantly increases the likelihood of behavioral conversion.

Table: Table showing correlations

		Mean Buying	Mean Awareness	Mean Comprehension	Mean Conviction	Mean Action
Pearson Correlation	Mean Buying	1.000	.199	.480	.133	.165
	Mean Awareness	.199	1.000	.141	.017	.202
	Mean Comprehension	.480	.141	1.000	.057	.142
	Mean Conviction	.133	.017	.057	1.000	.006
	Mean Action	.165	.202	.142	.006	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Mean Buying	.	.000	.000	.004	.000
	Mean Awareness	.000	.	.002	.363	.000
	Mean Comprehension	.000	.002	.	.127	.002
	Mean Conviction	.004	.363	.127	.	.454
	Mean Action	.000	.000	.002	.454	.

N	Mean Buying	405	405	405	405	405
	Mean Awareness	405	405	405	405	405
	Mean Comprehension	405	405	405	405	405
	Mean Conviction	405	405	405	405	405

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between DAGMAR components and buying decision. All independent variables show a positive and statistically significant relationship with buying decision. Among them, Comprehension exhibits the strongest correlation ($r = 0.480$), highlighting that consumers' understanding of advertising messages plays a critical role in influencing purchase decisions. Awareness, Conviction, and Action also demonstrate significant positive associations, though with comparatively lower magnitudes. These findings empirically support the DAGMAR proposition that advertising effectiveness increases as consumers move from awareness and understanding toward conviction and action.

Table: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.514 ^a	.264	.257	.5407	.264	35.930	4	400	.000	1.883

Source: Researcher's own calculation based on primary data

To assess the combined and individual impact of DAGMAR variables on buying decision, multiple regression analysis was performed. The R^2 value of 0.264 indicates that 26.4 percent of the variation in buying decision is explained by Awareness, Comprehension, Conviction, and Action. Although consumer behavior is influenced by multiple external factors, this explanatory power is considered adequate in behavioral and marketing research. The Durbin-Watson statistic suggests no serious autocorrelation problem, confirming the reliability of the regression model.

Table: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	42.010	4	10.503	35.930	.000 ^b
Residual	116.924	400	.292		
Total	158.935	404			

Source: Researcher's own calculation based on primary data

The ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 35.930$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the independent variables jointly have a significant effect on buying decision.

Table : Table showing coefficients

Model	Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations	
		B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial
1	Constant	1.079	0.253	-	4.261	.000	0.581	1.577	-	-

Impact of Advertisement on Audience Purchase Intention:
A Case Study of the Bhramyoman Theatre Industry of Assam

	Mean Awareness	0.075	0.028	0.118	2.688	.007	0.020	0.130	0.199	0.133
	Mean Comprehension	0.435	0.043	0.446	10.208	.000	0.351	0.519	0.480	0.455
	Mean Conviction	0.096	0.039	0.106	2.457	.014	0.019	0.173	0.133	0.122
	Mean Action	0.071	0.040	0.078	1.758	.079	-0.008	0.151	0.165	0.088

The regression results reveal that Comprehension is the most influential predictor of buying decision ($\beta = 0.446$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that clarity, informativeness, and message understanding significantly enhance consumers' likelihood of purchase, reinforcing the cognitive stage of the DAGMAR model. Awareness ($\beta = 0.118$, $p < 0.01$) and Conviction ($\beta = 0.106$, $p < 0.05$) also have statistically significant positive effects, indicating that exposure and attitudinal persuasion play meaningful roles in shaping buying behavior.

However, Action does not have a statistically significant effect at the 5 percent level ($p = 0.079$). This finding indicates that although advertising may encourage intent and readiness to purchase, actual buying behavior may depend on additional situational and economic factors such as price, income, availability and competitive alternatives. This supports the DAGMAR argument that movement from conviction to action is the most challenging stage and often requires supplementary marketing interventions.

The empirical findings strongly align with the DAGMAR hierarchy-of-effects model. The significant influence of Awareness and Comprehension highlights the importance of cognitive processing in advertising effectiveness, while the role of Conviction underscores the affective dimension of persuasion. The insignificance of Action in the regression model reflects the well-documented intention-behavior gap, suggesting that advertising alone may not be sufficient to trigger final purchase decisions. In conclusion the results validate advertising effectiveness and demonstrate that advertising primarily works by enhancing consumer knowledge and attitudes, which subsequently influence buying decisions.

Conclusion

The results of the model show that advertising and promotional measures is a significant motivating factor in audiences opting for the service experience. From quantitative data analysis, it is seen that people have an underlying belief that advertising does not have the ability increase the market demand. It have caused some apprehensions about increasing the advertisement budget. But the DAGMAR results shows otherwise. Thus, consistent efforts should be made by the performing arts groups for designing Integrated Marketing Communications. This shall not only help in keeping up the consistency for sales but also increase in the market size. With consistent and integrated promotional measures, the market size of the industry could be increased, converting a greater number of potential audiences into actual ones.

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